

DEALING WITH VICTIMS OF BIAS CRIMES/INCIDENTS

DO'S

- **Do** be available, and support the person by listening. Very few words will be consoling; listening is the best form of help in the first few hours and days.
- **Do** provide whatever resources you can for the person to hold on to.
- **Do** use non threatening phrases such as:

" I am so sorry.

" It is harder than most people think.

" Most people who have gone through this feel somewhat like you do.

" If I were in your situation, I would be very angry/sad too.

DON'TS

- **Don't** tell them it could have been worse, especially when it involves a death.
- **Don't** criticize expressions. There is no such thing as an abnormal expression of distress. Don't tell people not to cry; they need to be able to exhibit healthy sadness or anger. Never tell a bias crime/ incident victim they "shouldn't feel that way." Perhaps they are blaming themselves when there may not be any reason to do so, but imposing your values on someone by chastising them for the way they feel will not help.
- **Don't** minimize the loss by using phrases like "at least you're okay."
- **Don't** try to tell them that you understand or that you know how they feel. You do not. Even if you have been a victim yourself, each person's loss is unique.
- **Don't** use phrases such as "this was meant to happen" as if some supreme being orchestrated the disaster